

O 151157Z DEC 88
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4804
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
EC COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ATHENS 19586

TERREP

S/CT FOR WHARTON

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [GR](#)

SUBJECT: GREECE: 1988 ANNUAL TERRORISM REPORT

REF: STATE 357278

11. FOLLOWING IS THE EMBASSY'S SUBMISSION FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S UNCLASSIFIED ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGRESS ON TERRORISM IN 1988.

12. 1988 WAS A VERY BAD YEAR FOR COMBATTING TERRORISM IN GREECE. DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS INCREASED THEIR ACTIVITIES IN GREECE DURING THE YEAR, USING MORE LETHAL MEANS AGAINST AN EXPANDING ARRAY OF TARGETS. AMERICAN OFFICIALS WERE AT PARTICULAR HAZARD AND ONE U.S. EMBASSY OFFICER WAS KILLED. THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT COUNTER-TERRORIST SUCCESSES ACHIEVED BY THE GREEK GOVERNMENT. IN CONTRAST, GREEK JUSTICE MINISTERS TWICE OVERTURNED DECISIONS OF GREEK COURTS AND PERMITTED TERRORISTS WANTED IN ITALY TO GO FREE. THE GREEK GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS ITS RHETORICAL POSITION AGAINST TERRORISM, BUT THE RHETORIC HAS NOT BEEN MATCHED BY DEEDS.

13. A NUMBER OF DOMESTIC TERRORIST GROUPS OPERATED WITH IMPUNITY IN GREECE IN 1988, CARRYING OUT REPEATED BOMBINGS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FACILITIES. HOWEVER, THE MOST DANGEROUS AND DEADLY TERRORIST ORGANIZATION REMAINS "NOVEMBER 17", WHICH CONTINUED ITS THIRTEEN-YEAR CAMPAIGN OF MURDEROUS ATTACKS WHICH HAVE OFTEN BEEN AIMED AT U.S. OFFICIALS. "NOVEMBER 17" FAILED IN A JANUARY ATTEMPT TO KILL U.S. DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OFFICIAL GEORGE CARROS WITH A BOMB, BUT UNFORTUNATELY SUCCEEDED ON JUNE 28 IN ASSASSINATING THE U.S. EMBASSY DEFENSE ATTACHE, NAVY CAPTAIN WILLIAM NORDEEN, WITH A BOMB OF GREAT EXPLOSIVE POWER. ON AUGUST 14, "NOVEMBER 17" DEMONSTRATED ITS OPEN CONTEMPT FOR GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY BY SEIZING A POLICE STATION IN SUBURBAN ATHENS, BRIEFLY DETAINING ITS STAFF AND STEALING A STORE OF WEAPONS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT. IN ITS FREQUENT WRITTEN PROCLAMATIONS, "NOVEMBER 17" HAS MANIFESTED A HIGHLY ETHNOCENTRIC AND RADICAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY WHICH INCLUDES AMONG ITS PERCEIVED DEMONS THE UNITED STATES, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, NATO, THE GREEK GOVERNMENT, ALL GREEK POLITICAL PARTIES, A MARKET ECONOMY AND ALMOST ALL FACETS OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY. WHILE LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE INTERNAL WORKINGS OF "NOVEMBER 17", IT HAS CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATED SEVERAL IMPORTANT QUALITIES: RIGID INTERNAL SECURITY, A COMMITMENT TO SELF-PRESERVATION, METHODICAL PREPARATION AND EXECUTION OF ATTACKS, AND A PREFERENCE FOR HOMICIDAL OPERATIONS. OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS IT HAS ALSO SHOWN A WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO EXPAND SHARPLY THE NUMBER OF ITS ATTACKS WHILE EMPLOYING AN EXPANDED RANGE OF TECHNIQUES OF GREATLY ENHANCED LETHALITY. IN THIRTEEN YEARS OF OPERATION, NO MEMBER OF "NOVEMBER 17" HAS EVER BEEN PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED, APPREHENDED OR KILLED.

14. ANY ILLUSIONS THAT GREECE COULD REMAIN UNSCARRED BY THE SCOURGE OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM SHOULD HAVE BEEN DISPELLED IN 1988. FOREIGN TERRORISTS DEMONSTRATED THEIR ABILITY AND INTENT TO USE GREECE AS A BATTLEFIELD AND TO MAKE IT A VICTIM AS THEY SAW FIT. IN APRIL, A PROMINENT LEADER OF THE ARMENIAN SECRET ARMY FOR THE LIBERATION OF ARMENIA ("ASALA") RESIDENT IN GREECE, HAGOP HAGOPIAN, WAS ASSASSINATED IN FRONT OF HIS HOUSE IN ATHENS IN AN APPARENT INTERNAL "ASALA" DISPUTE. IN AN EVENT WHICH ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF THE WORLD JULY 11, GUNMEN USED MACHINE GUNS AND GRENADES TO CONDUCT A MASSACRE OF PASSENGERS ABOARD THE DAY EXCURSION BOAT "CITY OF POROS" IN THE SARONIC GULF NEAR ATHENS. NINE PASSENGERS WERE KILLED AND NEARLY ONE HUNDRED INJURED. ONLY HOURS BEFORE THE ATTACK, AN AUTOMOBILE PACKED WITH EXPLOSIVES BLEW UP AT A MARINA IN PIRAEUS, THE PORT OF ATHENS, KILLING ITS OCCUPANTS. WHILE NO ORGANIZATION HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE TWO EVENTS, WHICH WERE ALMOST CERTAINLY CONNECTED, CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE POINTS TO THE ABU NIDAL ORGANIZATION. ALTHOUGH THE PURPOSE OF THE ATTACK ON THE "CITY OF POROS" REMAINS A MATTER OF SPECULATION, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT A MUCH LARGER TERRORIST OPERATION WAS IN PREPARATION AND WENT WRONG. THERE HAVE BEEN NO ARRESTS IN CONNECTION WITH THESE EVENTS.

15. THE GREEK GOVERNMENT HAS REPEATEDLY STATED ITS "PRINCIPLED" POSITION IN OPPOSITION TO TERRORISM OF ALL FORMS. THESE STATEMENTS HAVE NOT SO FAR BEEN MATCHED BY SUBSTANTIVE COUNTER-TERRORIST ACHIEVEMENTS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS REPORTEDLY INCREASED THE RESOURCES AND PRIORITY IT ASSIGNS TO COMBATTING TERRORISM, GREEK SHIPOWNERS HAVE BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT INTERNATIONALLY IN PROPOSING AND IMPLEMENTING IMPROVED SECURITY MEASURES ON PASSENGER VESSELS, AND THE U.S. EMBASSY RECEIVED SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED COOPERATION FROM GREEK AUTHORITIES IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE KILLING OF CAPTAIN NORDEEN. HOWEVER, IN 1988 THERE WAS ONLY ONE ARREST (CITED BELOW), NO CONVICTIONS AND NO EXTRADITIONS OF SUSPECTED TERRORISTS IN GREECE. INDEED, THE CONTRARY IS THE CASE. IN NOVEMBER AN ATHENS COURT DISMISSED CHARGES AGAINST TWO SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF THE "ANTI-STATE STRUGGLE" ORGANIZATION FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE.

16. MUCH MORE SERIOUSLY, GREEK JUSTICE MINISTERS TWICE DURING THE YEAR OVERTURNED RULINGS BY GREEK COURTS (INCLUDING THE SUPREME COURT) WHICH FAVORED EXTRADITIONS OF PERSONS WANTED IN ITALY FOR TERRORIST OFFENSES. IN FEBRUARY THEN JUSTICE MINISTER KOUTSOYIORGAS EXERCISED HIS AUTHORITY TO REFUSE THE EXTRADITION OF MAURIZIO FOLINI, WANTED IN ITALY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE "RED BRIGADES", AND PERMITTED HIM TO GO FREE. IN DECEMBER JUSTICE MINISTER ROTIS REFUSED EXTRADITION TO ITALY OF PALESTINIAN ABDEL OZAMA AL-ZUMAR, WANTED FOR HIS ROLE IN THE 1982 FATAL BOMBING OF A ROME SYNAGOGUE BY THE ABU NIDAL ORGANIZATION, AND ALLOWED HIM TO DEPART FOR LIBYA. IN BOTH CASES THE JUSTICE MINISTERS CITED THE SUPPOSEDLY "POLITICAL" CHARACTER OF THE CRIMES AS THE BASIS FOR OVERRULING THE GREEK JUDICIARY. MINISTER ROTIS WENT SO FAR AS TO PUBLICLY REFER TO AL-ZUMAR'S CRIME AS "AN ACT ON BEHALF OF FREEDOM" WHICH HE COMPARED TO THE WARTIME RESISTANCE IN GREECE TO THE NAZI OCCUPATION.

17. THE SINGLE SUCCESS IN COUNTER-TERRORISM IN GREECE DURING 1988 WAS THE DETENTION ON MAY 30 OF PALESTINIAN MOHAMMED RASHID, WANTED IN THE UNITED STATES FOR THE 1982 BOMBING OF A PAN AMERICAN AIRLINER OVER THE PACIFIC IN WHICH A FOURTEEN-YEAR OLD JAPANESE BOY WAS KILLED. ON OCTOBER 10 AN

ATHENS COURT VOTED TWO-TO-ONE IN FAVOR OF THE U.S. REQUEST FOR THE EXTRADITION OF RASHID. AT YEAR'S END, THE CASE IS BEFORE THE GREEK SUPREME COURT FOR CONFIRMATION OF THE DECISION OF THE LOWER COURT. UNDER THE GREEK CONSTITUTION AND THE TERMS OF THE BILATERAL EXTRADITION TREATY, THE FINAL DECISION ON EXTRADITION WILL LIE WITH THE GREEK GOVERNMENT IN THE PERSON OF THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS MADE NO SECRET OF THE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE IT ATTACHES TO THE SUCCESSFUL EXTRADITION OF RASHID AND THE IMPORTANT PRECEDENT WHICH WOULD BE ESTABLISHED BY BRINGING HIM TO JUSTICE.

18. GREECE MAINTAINS DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO) AND PERMITS A PLO OFFICE TO OPERATE IN ATHENS. HOWEVER, GREECE HAS NOT RECOGNIZED THE RECENTLY-DECLARED "PALESTINIAN STATE".

19. DURING THE SECOND HALF OF 1988 IN CONNECTION WITH ITS ROLE AS ROTATING PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, GREECE CHAIRED THE ACTIVITIES OF THE TREVI GROUP, A COORDINATING BODY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS OF EC MEMBERS TO WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE U.S., HAVE OBSERVER STATUS. GREECE THEREFORE HOSTED THE SEMI-ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE TREVI GROUP IN ATHENS DECEMBER 8-9. THIS EVENT WAS UNFORTUNATELY OVERSHADOWED BY THE RELEASE OF AL-ZUMAR ON THE EVE OF THE MEETING.

KEELEY